



# Information Bulletin



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## Agriculture Buffer Area Requirements

For a farmer to be permitted to reduce the buffer area to a 25-foot width, must he implement all three water quality protection elements (erosion control, nutrient management, and pest management) of his Soil and Water Quality Conservation Plan that has been approved by the local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), or must he implement only that portion of the plan that demonstrates buffer equivalency?

### Answer:

For an agricultural field adjacent to a buffer area, the buffer may be reduced to a 25-foot width if (1) *all three* water quality protection elements of the SWCD-approved conservation plan for the field are implemented, *and* (2) it can be demonstrated that, in the opinion of the SWCD Board, buffer equivalency is achieved.

### Regulatory Requirements (§§ 4.2.9, 4.3.B.4):

*Land upon which agricultural activities are being conducted, including but not limited to crop production, pasture, and dairy and feedlot operations, shall have a soil and water quality conservation plan. Such a plan shall be based upon the Field Office Technical Guide of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service and accomplish water quality protection consistent with the Act and these regulations. Such a plan will be approved by the local Soil and Water Conservation District by January 1, 1995.*

*On agricultural lands the agricultural buffer area shall be managed to prevent concentrated flows of surface water from breaching the buffer area and noxious weeds (such as Johnson grass, kudzu, and multiflora rose) from invading the buffer area. The agricultural buffer area may be reduced as follows:*

*... b. To a minimum width of 25 feet when a soil and water quality conservation plan, as approved by the local Soil and Water Conservation District, has been implemented on the adjacent land, provided that the portion of the plan being implemented for the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area achieves water quality protection at least the equivalent of that provided by the 100 foot buffer area in the opinion of the local Soil and Water Conservation District Board. Such plan shall be based upon the Field Office Technical Guide of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service and accomplish water quality protection consistent with the Act and these regulations. . . (emphasis added).*



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